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Monday, 27 September 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by The Honourable Dato'Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia

The President *(spoke in French)*: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

The Honourable Dato'Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Dato'Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Badawi (Malaysia): May I, as Prime Minister of Malaysia and in my capacity as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement and Chairman of the tenth Islamic Summit Conference, offer my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your election as the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. I am confident that with your wisdom, experience and diplomatic skill, you will steer the proceedings of the Assembly to a successful conclusion. I assure you of Malaysia's fullest cooperation. I strongly believe that the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference would similarly render all their support and cooperation to you.

Allow me also to pay tribute to your distinguished predecessor, the Honourable Julian Robert Hunte of Saint Lucia. He discharged his responsibility with dedication and full commitment, in an efficient and effective manner. I commend especially his leadership in moving forward the process of revitalization of the General Assembly.

I wish to commend as well the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their perseverance and relentless efforts in pursuit of the goals of the United Nations. In particular, I congratulate the Secretary-General for his initiatives to claim for the United Nations a more central role in the management of world affairs. I salute also the dedicated men and women of the United Nations who have sacrificed their lives in the service of humanity.

When we met last year at the Assembly's fifty-eighth session, we were deeply distressed that there was so much gloom in the international situation as a result of a breakdown in the multilateral negotiating processes. We were bitterly divided over the invasion of Iraq; there was great disappointment about the deadlock in the World Trade Organization ministerial meeting in Cancún, and we had to mourn the death of international civil servants who were killed during an act of terrorism against the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad.

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Therefore, I consider it our solemn obligation at this fifty-ninth session to reaffirm the rightful role of the United Nations in the management of critical issues affecting international peace and security, and commit ourselves to abide by multilateralism in the quest for a more just and equitable international order. We must also take the necessary steps to ensure that never again should the United Nations be sidelined.

As the General Assembly is the most representative organ of the United Nations, we must dedicate ourselves to finding consensus on measures to revitalize the Assembly to fulfil its mandate in accordance with the Charter. We must build upon the work done in the fifty-eighth session. Again, we look towards the leadership of the Assembly President in that regard.

In that connection, the Malaysian delegation wishes to advocate that this fifty-ninth session of the Assembly accord high priority to ensuring that the United Nations regains its central role in social, economic and development issues. The United Nations — through an enhanced Economic and Social Council — should provide the impetus for the creation of an international economic system which better promotes the interests of developing countries. The United Nations must do more to realize all internationally agreed targets, particularly the Millennium Development Goals. As the eradication of poverty and hunger is fundamental to the achievement of those Goals, Malaysia fully appreciates the Brazilian initiative to create new and innovative forms of funding to meet those challenges.

We look forward to receiving the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, appointed by the Secretary-General last year. We believe the Secretary-General will make his own recommendations based on that report, and they should provide the basis for in-depth discussion among Member States in the months leading up to the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations.

This world body, the processes of multilateralism and, indeed, the entire international system must necessarily change. However, those changes must be effected without sacrificing certain immutable principles, such as sovereign equality, non-interference in the domestic affairs of States, peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for international law. What we do in that respect during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly will therefore be crucial.

Reform of the United Nations is a cause particularly dear to both the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. They look forward to working closely with you, Mr. President, as well as with other Members of the United Nations and the Secretary-General on this matter.

Most immediately, we must find ways and means to let the United Nations assume its proper role in combating international terrorism. Malaysia is convinced that the fight against terrorism cannot succeed through the force of arms alone. To win it, we need to exert genuine efforts and demonstrate good faith to address the root causes of terrorism, one of the most obvious of which is the unfulfilled dreams of peoples struggling for independence and aspiring to sovereign States of their own. To find the answers, we must promote genuine dialogue and rid ourselves of the prejudices and bigotry triggered by the events of 11 September and further aggravated by subsequent events. The United Nations is clearly the best forum for such a dialogue to take place without malice, in a shared environment that is devoted to finding peace among nations and building friendship between peoples. The United Nations can facilitate the convening of a special international conference to consider the question in all its aspects, including the root causes of terrorism and the issue of State-sponsored terrorism.

One of the most important aspects to be addressed by such a dialogue is the necessity to inculcate a frank appreciation, understanding and acceptance of different civilizations and cultures, including religions. There is an urgent need to stop tarnishing the Muslim world with unfair stereotypes. We must cease associating Islam with violence, poverty and indignity. In reality, the troubles have nothing to do with Islam; nor are the problems exclusively associated with Muslims. We need to clear the confusion that links the problems faced by some Muslim countries with the religion of Islam.

We also note with great concern the increasing tendency to link the fight against terrorism with the campaign against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Developing countries suffer as a result of restrictions imposed on their access for peaceful uses

to the technology, equipment and material necessary for their economic development. Malaysia is fully and firmly committed to the cause of non-proliferation, but there must be multilateral negotiations for universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements and arrangements. Above all, nothing should be done at the expense of the resources needed for the international development agenda.

Most damaging of all is the increasing tendency to attribute linkages between international terrorism and Islam. The time has indeed arrived for us to debunk, once and for all, the theory that there is a clash of civilizations. I speak from the experience of my own country, Malaysia, where we have shown that Islam is not an impediment to modernity and to democracy. It is not an impediment to rapid economic growth, to self-respect and confidence, to tolerance and mutual respect across religions, cultures and ethnic groups. In Malaysia, we celebrate the multi-ethnicity of our people, of Malaysians. For us, our multi-ethnic and cultural diversity is a national asset. It has taught us to be tolerant, value mutual respect and cooperate for the common good. We sincerely believe that this message deserves a wider audience.

I am certain that the Organization of the Islamic Conference would be supportive of a dialogue designed to create greater understanding between peoples and civilizations and that would lead to real action and effect changes at the societal level. The Non-Aligned Movement, too, would be equally keen to support initiatives that would have the effect of establishing harmony and restoring stability in the world.

Since the stability of many nation-States continues to be threatened, especially by armed conflicts, there is a critical need, more than ever, for Members of the United Nations to unite and close ranks to put a stop to such conflicts, be they inter-State or intra-State.

Iraq is still in turmoil. Although Security Council resolution 1546 (2004) of 8 June 2004 enabled the return of sovereignty to the people of Iraq, the unrelenting conflict continues in that country. The same resolution also renewed the mandate of the multinational force, but the reality on the ground suggests that the existing arrangements cannot stabilize the situation there.

The situation in Iraq clearly calls for the United Nations to be given the lead role, particularly in establishing stability in preparation for the elections scheduled for January 2005. Orderly elections are critical to the process of re-establishing a truly independent and sovereign Government in Iraq.

The United Nations also has the best credentials to enable Member States to take part in peace-building and in the reconstruction of Iraq. The international community owes it to the people of Iraq to summon its collective resolve and political will to allow all of that to happen. If we collectively succeed in assisting Iraq to seize the moment, we would also succeed at the same time in bringing a closure to the bitter divisiveness which was brought about, in the beginning, by unilateralism over that same issue.

While the precarious situation in Iraq cries out for United Nations action, the plight and suffering of the people of Palestine remains a tragic embodiment of the consequences of non-implementation of United Nations resolutions and the non-enforcement of United Nations decisions. We must actively revive the road map for peace in the Middle East, which remains unimplemented. The Quartet needs to play a more vigorous role. The international community must lend its full weight to push for an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and with Israel and Palestine living peacefully, side by side within secure and recognized borders.

To create an environment of confidence for the speedy resuscitation of the road map, we must seriously consider approving the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force or the deployment of an international monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of the road map for peace in the Middle East.

We must also find ways to give effect to the historic advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory. In October last year, the General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted a resolution demanding that Israel stop and reverse construction of the wall built in the West Bank. It is unacceptable that a multilateral resolution giving effect to the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion cannot be effectively implemented. Clearly, the search for peace and security also depends on our willingness and determination to ensure its enforceability.

I strongly believe that multilateralism is the only approach for implementing resolutions and decisions concerning global peace and security. Adherence to the Charter of the United Nations should be a solemn obligation, not a matter of choice. For Malaysia, the United Nations is crucial as the guarantor of the sanctity of our existence as a sovereign nation and as the institution where the principles of international law are protected and safeguarded. Small nations such as Malaysia do not have the military and other means to insulate themselves from invasion or occupation by big Powers. But no sovereign nation should ever be subjected to the threat of military action by another. No international intervention should ever be undertaken unless consistent with the United Nations Charter. If the law of the jungle were to prevail, the small and the weak would certainly perish.

In this matter, no one should ever lose sight of the fact that when the defence of the nation-State is called for, it is actually the well-being of the State's people that is at stake. The world must take special note of this and give due recognition to the voices and the contributions of global civil society in matters affecting international peace and security.

To foster genuine peace and security, the world naturally looks to the big Powers for leadership. A sincere commitment to multilateralism on the part of the big Powers will send a strong signal to all nations, large and small, that the purposes and principles of the United Nations shall form the basis of the conduct of relations between nations. Such a commitment will also provide the foundation for a true international partnership, not only for establishing global peace and security but also for achieving international economic and social development. Of course, multilateralism can be sustained only if it embraces all nations as important stakeholders and excludes none.

Therefore, urgent steps must be taken to make multilateral processes relevant and effective. To begin, the principal organs of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, should be rendered more democratic and more representative of the number and geographical distribution of its international membership. The exercise of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council should be regulated in order to prohibit that power from being used at the sole discretion of its holder. It is unjust that any single country should be allowed the impunity of overruling at will the wish of the majority. That injustice can be rectified, for example, by enabling certain types of General Assembly resolutions to overrule a Security Council veto.

We must find a comprehensive and just solution to the problem of Palestine. We must allow the United Nations to take the lead role in stabilizing the situation in Iraq. We need to address seriously and resolutely the scourge of international terrorism, the elimination of global poverty, the proliferation of transnational crimes, the destruction of the environment and the spread of the AIDS epidemic, as well as the economic and social advancement of all humankind. The global economic order, especially in the sphere of international finance, must be made more fair and equitable. The way forward and our best hope lie in universal commitment now to multilateralism.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Malaysia for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Dato'Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Farouk Al-Shara', Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Al-Shara' (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that your wisdom, drawn from the positions of your friendly country of Gabon, will stand you in good stead in promoting dialogue among the peoples and the countries of the world, in invigorating the role of the United Nations and in preserving its Charter.

I also express my appreciation, Sir, to your predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte, for his efforts to bring the previous session to a successful conclusion.

I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his patience and efforts to make the voice of the United Nations heard in a precarious international situation, amid volatile regional conditions, in which force is preferred to law, wrong preferred to right and war preferred to peace. Our world has been going through extremely difficult times since 11 September 2001. That is particularly true of the United States and the Middle East. The

United Nations could have very well shared the fate of the League of Nations in the 1930s, although very little thought was given to the dire consequences that such a development would have entailed, given the absence of other alternatives.

It is no exaggeration to argue that the major challenges today to the questions of peace, security and development stem not only from failing to heed the United Nations Charter but also from manipulating some of its Articles to greatly disrupt and derail international relations and to deliberately upset the international equilibrium that we inherited from the cold war era.

Thus, it becomes clear that the surge in extremism, the diversity of its causes and manifestations and the spread of poverty and hunger across large parts of the world are not the concern of only one country, one people or one religion, but, rather, of all peoples, countries and religions of the world.

It is also clear that this deteriorating situation, which the international community acknowledges but has failed to strive in earnest to remedy, will not serve anyone in particular. This is all the more true now that the justifications of the cold war era, with its enormous expenses on armaments, can no longer be invoked and that pre-emptive wars, with the great losses in life and property they entail, have proven useless. The mistakes committed during the world war on terror, regardless of whether they were committed in good faith or in bad faith, have worked as a call to promote and practice terrorism, which has been embraced by an enemy whose whereabouts we do not know. This enemy is committing acts so horrific that they remind us of the Middle Ages.

In this context, the peoples of the developing countries are wondering why hundreds of fighter jets and thousands of soldiers would be hauled across the continents and why billions of dollars would be spent to bring about a regime change in certain countries when those resources could have been channelled — even partially — into financing education and development projects in those same countries? When reform becomes a national and an international demand, how can we justify to those seeking reform the fact that the movers and the shakers of the world chose to impose sanctions instead of investing in peace and prosperity and chose to spend billions on war instead of opting for the road that would surely lead to reform and progress? Is it possible to prove that throughout history military solutions, and not political or economic solutions, have been more effective tools for reform and progress and for saving the lives of millions of people plagued by injustice, poverty and disease? At any rate, while political solutions may not necessarily guarantee full success, military solutions are definitely a recipe for failure.

Moreover, while such an argument may sound idealistic, there can be no alternative to political solutions. The current international dilemma is exacerbated by military solutions. There are many examples to prove that argument. We can cite, by way of example, the situations in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places.

Left alone, that dilemma will not be solved. It can only be solved if the leaders of the world work in earnest and evince the necessary political will to restore credibility to the United Nations and guarantee respect for international legitimacy through their commitment to United Nations resolutions that are based on the principles and purposes of the Charter. Justice and equality, it must be recalled, are at the core of the Charter of this Organization.

The peoples of the world were optimistic about the great strides that were made in science and technology and the collective and individual achievements that spanned all fields of human endeavour in the past two decades. They aspired to a globalization with a human face that was based on a dialogue among civilizations, and synergies with other cultures, that would keep the spectre of cold and hot wars at bay. However, some power circles attempted to exploit those great human achievements to further their own narrow interests. They devised new colonialist policies that disappointed the peoples of the world and turned back the clock.

At the speed of light, the world forgot about the surge of optimism that overwhelmed many of the world's leaders as they addressed this Assembly four years ago when they celebrated the third Millennium. Today, a wave of pessimism has taken over the world because of extremist and intolerant policies advanced by some strategic think-tanks that were determined to find a new enemy, under any pretext, after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Israel has contributed to the creation of many of those flimsy pretexts. It has packaged them with great care, breathed life into many of them, and distributed them among the delegations that owe allegiance to it. It was hoping to achieve the following: first, to incite the Americans in particular and the West in general to wage endless wars in the Middle East, in order to underscore the old-new theory of Israel that the Arab-Israeli conflict is not the core of the problems of the region. To prove our point we refer to the argument promoted by Israel that the situation in Iraq and its repercussions are more dangerous and complicated than that prevailing in the occupied Arab territories and Palestine. Sharon is trying to mislead world public opinion into believing that achieving peace would require only the dismantling of some Jewish settler outposts in Gaza, not withdrawal from the West Bank and the occupied Palestinian territories, let alone withdrawal from East Jerusalem and accepting a just solution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees.

Secondly, Israel hoped to divert the attention of the world and camouflage the settlement activities in the occupied Arab territories that have continued unabated, while continuing to build the racist segregation wall and lessening the importance of State terror perpetrated by Israel on a daily basis. Israel has repackaged its policies as an act of self-defence that does not warrant condemnation and denunciation even though it targets innocent civilians.

But Israel has not fully succeeded in realizing its goals, and even where it has, that success will be short-lived because Israel has in recent years transformed its regular army into gangs bent on committing systematic killings and war crimes against Palestinian civilians, all perpetrated in the territories it occupies in the West Bank and Gaza. Killing the Palestinians often occurs in the course of house demolitions that terrorize their wretched occupants, who frequently look death in the eye.

All this notwithstanding, the defenceless Palestinians have stayed the course and refused to surrender or leave. Israel bears an important share of the responsibility for the intensification and worsening of the American predicament in Iraq by avoiding the resumption of the peace process despite the hand extended to it in peace by the Palestinians, Syrians, and Lebanese.

I must repeat that Israel bears an important share of the responsibility for the intensification and worsening of the American predicament in Iraq owing to its failure to resume the peace process. The Israeli course of action may come back to haunt it because its continued occupation of the Arab lands is a major cause of the rejection of American policies in the broader Middle East.

That is also true in Europe where polls conducted a year ago showed that most of the citizens of the European Union believe that Israel poses a threat to international peace.

Among the strategic mistakes committed by the think-tanks and research centres that owe their allegiance to Israel is to mislead the Israelis into believing that the new Iraq will hasten to conclude peace agreements with Israel and establish diplomatic relations with it before it withdraws from the occupied Arab territories. They ignored the fact that the Iraqis refused to adopt the new flag that was designed for their country after the war simply because its colours somehow bear resemblance to the Israeli flag.

The deteriorating situation in Iraq remains a source of great concern for my country and other countries in the region and the world. That state of affairs should prompt all of us to mobilize all efforts to win the battle for peace in post-war Iraq.

Syria, a neighbouring country directly concerned with events in Iraq — given our historic and geographical ties as well as our common national bonds with the Iraqi people — has spared no effort to guarantee Iraq's stability, security, independence, territorial integrity and the unity of its people. We stand ready to cooperate with the neighbouring countries and all the parties concerned, including the United Nations, to enable the Iraqi people to govern themselves, manage their resources and establish optimal relations with their neighbours.

Syria has repeatedly declared its commitment to a just and comprehensive peace. We continue to call for the withdrawal of Israel from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967, for guaranteeing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish their own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, namely, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the Madrid

terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative endorsed by the Beirut summit of 2002.

That was the basis of Syria's serious engagement in the peace negotiations for over a decade. The literature published on the subject recently in the United States and Israel bears witness to the seriousness with which Syria approached those negotiations. What the peace process lacks today is a strategic Israeli decision comparable to the Syrian decision to achieve peace in the region.

It was rather disparaging that the Foreign Minister of Israel used this rostrum of international legitimacy to ignore the facts and selectively refer to a resolution recently adopted by the Security Council on Lebanon. Israel violates Lebanese airspace, territorial waters, land borders and sovereignty on a daily basis and continues to occupy parts of Lebanese territory.

The representative of Israel tried, in vain, to misguide the international community. The world community today bears witness to Israel's persistent non-compliance with 40 Security Council and 600 General Assembly resolutions, all of which call upon Israel to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories so that a just and comprehensive peace can be established in the region. Soon after the adoption of every resolution Israel would reject it, levelling accusations and heaping insults on the Organization. It has refused to allow entry to members of fact-finding missions, and has even harassed them. Given all those facts, does anyone have the right to ask whether the statements by the representative of Israel mark the beginning of a radical change in the position of his Government, perhaps indicating the pursuit of a policy that respects international legitimacy and is committed to compliance with its resolutions?

For centuries our region has endured more foreign threats and onslaughts, acts of aggression, misrepresentations of facts and use of force against our peoples than any other region. Its potential has been wasted and its material and intellectual resources squandered, thus preventing it from attaining its development goals and advancing its capacities. The Middle East suffers an explosive situation brought about by Israeli's expansionist policies, continued occupation and virtual sabotage of any chance for peace in the region. Furthermore, Israel's acquisition of a nuclear arsenal constitutes a major destabilizing factor in the Middle East region that threatens the future of its peoples.

Syria was among the first countries of the region to call for declaring the Middle East region a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. We have seriously worked to attain that objective. We have joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We have also contributed to numerous initiatives to attain that goal, most recently through the draft resolution we submitted on behalf of the Arab Group to the Security Council on 29 December 2003 (see A/58/667, annex). The draft resolution called for the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East region, in particular nuclear weapons, in the context of a collective international monitoring regime under United Nations supervision, which would enhance the role of multilateral international disarmament conventions.

International terrorism is a cause for concern for us all. Together we should work to eradicate that dangerous phenomenon by addressing its root causes. It is on this basis that Syria has condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We condemn the kidnapping and killing of innocent people and the targeting of civilians, government institutions, humanitarian agencies, religious establishments, international organizations and diplomatic missions.

In that context, we reiterate our condemnation of the heinous terrorist act that killed innocent children in a school in Beslan, Russia. We also call on the international community to condemn the systematic State terror perpetrated by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories against the defenceless Palestinian people, as well as the many massacres perpetrated by Israeli occupation forces, in which innocent children, women and the elderly are killed.

During its tenure on the Security Council, Syria strove to support the Council's efforts to combat international terrorism. It has acceded to most of the international counter-terrorism conventions as well as to the Arab and Organization of the Islamic Conference anti-terrorism conventions. The two latter conventions define crimes of terrorism and distinguish between terrorism and the legitimate right of occupied peoples

to resist occupation in accordance with international law and the United Nations Charter.

My country is following with great concern the developments in the brotherly Sudan. That concern stems primarily from our commitment to the territorial integrity of the Sudan and the unity of its people. We view with satisfaction the positions and measures adopted by the Government of the Sudan to address the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. We believe that the League of Arab States and the African Union can play an important role in the settlement of the crisis.

Syria welcomes the increased role of the African Union in seeking effective solutions to the major issues facing the countries and the peoples of Africa. We believe that the African Union's conflict settlement mechanisms, including its Peace and Security Council, will strengthen the role of that important continent and its ability to face the challenges of peace and development.

In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders underscored the need to create an environment favourable to development and to eradicate poverty at the national and global levels. Have we acted upon those commitments? How far have we gone on the road towards implementation of the Millennium Development Goals? Have we taken the necessary steps and cooperated far enough to give the necessary impetus to efforts towards progress in the entire developing world?

Development is a human right to which every human being is entitled. It is not an exclusive privilege available to one side to the detriment of the other, regardless of the disparities between them. That right should be accorded priority status on our agenda, and it must not be manipulated for political gains.

It is heartening to note that some enlightened leaders have taken it upon themselves to shed light on two of the most critical problems of our world: poverty and hunger. In launching the Action Against Hunger and Poverty, they proposed practical collective solutions to preserve man's dignity. Syria welcomes the Declaration issued by the world leaders in response to the initiative of the Brazilian President to discuss that question.

Syria has effectively contributed to the debate on the reform of the United Nations system, the revitalization of the General Assembly and the reform of the Security Council and the increase of its membership. Syria hopes that, at this session, the Assembly will continue to address the urgent questions of peace and development so that a broad consensus will emerge and coordinated measures will be adopted towards resolving those questions. The prime objective of reforming the United Nations is to enhance its ability to face the new threats and challenges. However, reform should be built on commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter.

Syria is following with keen interest the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change appointed by the Secretary-General to review current and future threats to international peace and security and the current state of affairs of the main organs of the United Nations, with a view to submitting proposals on enhancing their roles. Syria will be participating in the deliberations among Member States on the proposals and opinions of the Panel.

As we have made clear in past years, Syria supports reforming the Security Council and increasing its membership. In our view, that reform should be based on the principles of universality, effectiveness, democratic participation and geographical representation, particularly of developing countries. Syria has consistently stressed the importance of assigning a permanent seat on the Security Council to the Arab States, to be allocated by rotation among the Member States in accordance with the procedures of the League of Arab States.

Since its establishment, the United Nations has successfully overcome many acute regional and international crises. Its Charter has had to coexist with some of those crises. At times, the United Nations has dealt with those crises successfully. At other times, it has skirted them without actually coming to grips with them. A case in point is the Palestinian question, which is as old as the United Nations itself. The Arab-Israeli conflict still rages in spite of the fact that the United Nations has adopted more than 600 resolutions on the subject. Israel, however, has not implemented a single one of these resolutions and continues to find protection both inside and outside the United Nations.

A lot has been said about establishing a greater Middle East. We are convinced that success in achieving that will remain elusive unless the relevant resolutions are implemented and peace is restored, in

accordance with the aspirations of the people of the region and the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Li Zhaoxing, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Pecple's Republic of China.

Mr. Li Zhaoxing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I offer my warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. I am confident that under your presidency fruitful results will be achieved. I also wish to pay a cordial tribute to Mr. Julian Robert Hunte, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, and to Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

The recent appalling terror in Beslan, Russia, caused massive casualties, including many children. On behalf of the Chinese Government, I strongly condemn, once again, that inhuman act of terrorist violence and extend our deep condolences to the families of the victims.

Peace and development remain the dominant themes in today's world. Multipolarization and economic globalization are moving forward in twists and turns. Science and technology are advancing at a dizzying speed. Forces that make for peace and factors that lead to war are both on the rise. Human society is moving in a bright, progressive and positive direction.

However, the light of peace has not fallen on every corner of the globe, nor has development reached every inch of the Earth. Threats to security, both traditional and non-traditional, are intertwined. The dark cloud of war remains menacing. Hot spots keep springing up. Terrorist activities are raging, and cross-border problems such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, drug trafficking, transnational crime and illegal immigration are erupting one after another. Factors of uncertainty, instability and unpredictability are increasing.

In the course of economic globalization, the gap between the North and the South is widening. Developing countries are confronting new difficulties and challenges as a growing number of them are further marginalized. Today, half the global population lives on less than $2 a day, and of those, 1.2 billion live on less than $1 a day. Much remains to be done to implement the Millennium Development Goals.

Peace, development and cooperation are the prerequisites for our times. People all over the world are raising their voice in favour of peace, development and cooperation and against war, poverty and confrontation. Peace is the precondition for human development and prosperity. Without a peaceful and stable international environment, development is out of the question for any country. A chaotic world benefits no one. Having experienced the scourge of two world wars, mankind would not tolerate any more war or bloodshed. Thus it is the fervent aspiration of all peoples to live and achieve development in a secure and stable environment.

In tackling security issues, it is imperative to foster a new security concept of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation. This new concept calls for nations to transcend their differences in ideology and social systems, respect one another's security interests, promote greater democracy in international relations and seek peaceful solutions to disputes through dialogue.

Terrorism is the common enemy of the whole world. China stands firmly opposed to terrorism in all forms and manifestations. To prevent and fight terrorism, we must intensify international cooperation and address both the causes and symptoms of the threat. Only when the root causes of terrorism are eradicated can peoples live in peace and tranquillity again.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction poses a threat to world peace and security. Non-proliferation efforts therefore require the participation of all members of the international community. Likewise, it is important to discard unilateralism and double standards and to give full credit and full latitude to the role of the United Nations.

China takes an active part in multilateral non-proliferation efforts and firmly defends the international regime of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties. China believes that multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation processes can be steadily promoted in order to further improve the international non-proliferation regime.

There is still a long way to go before peace and reconstruction can be realized in Iraq. We support an important role for the United Nations in Iraq's political process, helping that country achieve the smooth holding of elections.

We appeal to Palestine and Israel to resume dialogue as soon as possible and to start implementing the Middle East road map faithfully. As always, China will work to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and talks, in the interest of peace and stability on the Peninsula.

Development is the foundation for human progress. Lasting peace and stability throughout the world depends on coordinated, balanced and universal development. Development is of overriding importance. Living in peace, abundance and harmony between nations has been the dream of many generations. Coordinated, balanced and sustainable development serves the fundamental interests of all peoples and works for their well-being.

In order to promote economic growth worldwide, it is necessary for the international community to take effective measures to put in place an open and fair multilateral trading regime and gradually improve it. It is also important to reform and improve the international financial system.

The developed countries must honour their commitments to debt reduction, technology transfer and market access through concrete actions in order to enable developing countries to really benefit from globalization. The developing countries, for their part, need to work together to attain development and take part in a wide range of international efforts. They should also deepen South-South cooperation.

We, the members of the international community, should join hands in working for a just and equitable new international economic order that meets the needs of the growing economic globalization and serves the common interests of all countries.

The Millennium Development Goals are our solemn, collective pledge. The United Nations should further mobilize resources, strengthen coordination and increase its input to development activities in order to help Member States achieve these important goals as scheduled.

Cooperation is an effective way of dealing with the collective challenges facing humankind. To strengthen international cooperation, we must champion multilateralism. The United Nations is the centre of the international multilateral system and the key platform for making multilateralism work. It is the widespread desire of the international community to adhere to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, take more collective actions, strengthen the role of the United Nations and safeguard its authority.

The threats and challenges we face make it imperative to strengthen, rather than weaken, the role of the United Nations. A stronger United Nations is indispensable for maintaining global peace and stability and promoting the common development of humankind. All Member States should honour their commitments to the Charter of the United Nations and fulfil their international responsibilities and obligations.

The world is eagerly looking forward to a dynamic and action-oriented United Nations. China supports necessary and rational reforms of the Organization. Such reforms should aim at enhancing the leading role of the United Nations in international affairs, reinforcing its capacity to tackle new threats and challenges, and ensuring that better reflects the aspirations and needs of the vast majority of developing countries.

China is in favour of expanding the Security Council and of giving priority to greater representation of the developing countries. China also supports the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, and it is looking forward to the Panel's report by the end of this year, so that it can be reviewed by Member States.

China is a staunch force working for world peace, common development and international cooperation. After over half a century of strenuous efforts and more than two decades of reform and opening up, China has now entered a new stage of development aimed at building a moderately prosperous society all-round. However, China is still a developing country, and a large population and inadequate economic development remain its basic national conditions. It has a long way to go before achieving its development goals.

The Chinese Government will always place development at the top of its agenda. The fact that China — a large, developing country with 1.3 billion people — runs its own affairs well is in itself a major contribution to peace and to the development of humanity.

China desires peace, development and cooperation, and strives to win peace and development through cooperation. It is working to promote democracy in international relations, diversity in its modes of development and richness in the world's civilizations. It advocates a new security concept and facilitates the establishment of a fair and equitable new international order.

China will pursue with determination an independent foreign policy of peace, adhere to the five principles for Peaceful Coexistence, and engage in mutually beneficial and friendly cooperation with other countries on an equal footing.

China will unswervingly safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity, brook no interference in its internal affairs by foreign forces and, at the same time, respect other countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity.

China remains committed to the common interests of humankind. China's national interests, in the final analysis, are consistent with the common interests of all humankind. In handling State-to-State relations, China will safeguard its own interests while taking into account the interests of other countries. China will adhere to the policy of opening up, and develop economic relations and trade with all other nations on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

China's development stands in the way of no one, nor does it pose any threat to others. China is following the path of peaceful development, seeking an international environment of peace and stability for its own development and promoting world peace and progress through its own prosperity.

China is working steadily to develop its relations with the world's major countries. It will stay committed to the policy of building friendship and partnership with its neighbours and combine stronger bilateral friendships with enhanced regional cooperation. It will strengthen solidarity and cooperation with other developing countries and support any justified demands or legitimate propositions on their part in international affairs. It will play a constructive role in the political, economic, social, disarmament, arms control and other multilateral fields; safeguard the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the universally recognized norms governing international relations; and support any consensus that serves the common interests of all countries.

Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory. Safeguarding China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and realizing complete national reunification at an early date is the common will and firm resolve of the 1.3 billion Chinese people. Pursuing the policy of "peaceful reunification and one country, two systems", the Chinese Government is ready to work tirelessly towards a peaceful reunification with the utmost sincerity. We, more than anyone else, want to see a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question. But we will never tolerate Taiwan independence, nor will we allow anyone to separate Taiwan from the rest of China in any way.

We hope that the international community will fully recognize the complex and sensitive nature of the current situation across the Taiwan Strait and the serious threat posed by the separatist activities of the Taiwan authorities to the stability of the Taiwan Strait and the peace of the Asia-Pacific region. We expect the Assembly to continue supporting the Chinese Government's efforts for peaceful reunification and to join us in containing pro-independence activities, in the interest of stability in the Strait and of world peace.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. As the basic guidelines for State-to-State relations, the Five Principles have withstood the test of half a century and remain an irrefutable truth. The Five Principles, which include peace, development and cooperation, are consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. They provide guidance for the establishment and development of relations between countries with identical or different social systems; point to the correct path towards the peaceful settlement of outstanding issues between countries and international disputes; firmly defend the interests of the developing countries; and facilitate the improvement and development of North-South relations. The Five Principles present important ideas that must underpin the establishment of a fair and equitable new international order.

China not only initiated, but has faithfully observed, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Given the new realities of today, we will continue to champion those Principles and join all the peoples of

the world in advancing the lofty cause of peace, development and cooperation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Hassan Wirajuda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

Mr. Wirajuda (Indonesia): I am pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. May I also pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Julian Robert Hunte of Saint Lucia, for having ably presided over our deliberations during the previous session of the General Assembly.

Even as I speak, a magnificent transformation is being completed on the other side of the globe — in my country. Many of us in Indonesia have waited all our lives to witness this historic event: our people finally rising to take their destiny into their own hands.

Exactly a week ago, some 125 million men and women trooped to the polling stations and chose the President and Vice-President who will govern in the name of 230 million Indonesians. That was the third national political exercise that we had to carry out — not just once, but three times — in a period of six months, the previous two being the parliamentary elections and the first round of the presidential elections. All of them were peaceful, fair and democratic.

Each of them was an enormous operation, covering some 6,000 islands in an archipelago with an expanse as wide as Europe's, and involving millions of election workers attending to some 575,000 polling stations. As we coped with the massive logistical requirements of that undertaking, we were extended support and assistance by the United Nations and friendly countries. We are grateful for this.

It will be some time before the official results of the vote are in. But whoever the new national leaders of Indonesia may be, they will have a clear and strong mandate from the people — not from the elite, not from the party bosses, nor from power brokers or vested interests — but from the people. This is the climax of a transition from authoritarian rule to a full-fledged democracy, a process that began six years ago in the crucible of the Asian crisis, which devastated our economy and mangled our socio-political system. We have thus become the full-fledged democracy that the founding fathers of our Republic long ago envisioned.

This need for political reform is also felt by other nations. The Emir of Qatar, speaking as Chairman of the Group of 77, told this Assembly at its 3rd meeting,

> "Political reform and people's participation in decision-making are no longer an option but have become a definite necessity".

Hence, we are proud of this democracy of ours. It is the fulfilment of a universal human aspiration, and yet it is unique to us. It sprang from our native soil, a true child of our culture. It was not imposed from outside, at gunpoint. And it put to rest the debate on whether Islam and democracy can ever mix.

As the country with the largest Muslim population, Indonesia has proven that Islam can be a bastion of democracy and social justice. Indeed, our deep sense of spirituality inspired our people to resoundingly reject money politics, corruption, terrorism and all forms of extremism. It was also our beacon towards reform; and reform has worked for us. Although the Asian crisis instantly doubled the number of Indonesians living below the poverty line, we have since been able to reduce the poverty rate to its pre-crisis level. We did this by shifting from a Government-driven poverty-reduction strategy to one of community empowerment. This effort required funding of more than US$1 billion, making it one of the largest such programmes in the world.

Through fiscal controls that dramatically lowered inflation, we stabilized the prices of essential goods. Through social safety net programmes, we helped the poor to weather the crisis. By doing this, we denied the terrorists what could have been a dangerous mass base.

Since then, consumer confidence has led our economic growth. With political fears allayed and investor confidence boosted, we look forward to 4.8 per cent growth this year, and 5.5 per cent next year. We can now wage a stronger battle against poverty.

By consolidating our efforts to promote the rule of law, greater respect for human rights and effective regional autonomy as the main pillars of our reform, we are confident that we can overcome threats to our national unity and security, including communal violence, separatism and terrorism.

We continue to strengthen our relations with all our neighbours. We have made a fresh start with Timor-Leste, and we are building a strong relationship.

We look forward to a future of bilateral peace, friendship and cooperation.

This does not mean that we have solved all our problems. We still have to make democracy work for us some more and to keep it working. This is what 230 million Indonesians devoutly wish, and they deserve no less. Moreover, no democracy is safe without being assured of a democratic environment at the global level. That environment cannot be created by unilateral action, no matter how mighty and well-intended.

At the global level, democracy can be promoted only by democratic means, through multilateral institutions like the United Nations. If, as its detractors say, the United Nations is not an effective tool of collective security and development, this is only because it has been denied the support that it deserves from its strongest and most influential Members.

But we need the United Nations to give legitimacy to the necessary use of force in the cause of collective security. And even the wealthiest nations in the world cannot bear all the costs of global security. The privilege and burden of decision-making must be shared by all.

Hence, we must empower the United Nations to serve as the effective tool of multilateralism that it was always meant to be. We must reform the United Nations comprehensively, including the Security Council, by making it more democratic, in terms of procedure and representation, in order to reflect today's geographical realities.

In this regard, it may be recalled that Australia last year proposed the inclusion of Indonesia as a permanent member on the Council. We appreciate Australia's position. It has greatly encouraged us. As the world's third largest pluralistic democracy, the fourth most populous country, the world's largest Muslim nation, a country of tremendous cultural diversity and a member with a track record of serving in various peace initiatives of the United Nations, Indonesia has an important global constituency on the Council.

Indonesia has served in more than 30 peacekeeping missions, starting with the very first, in the Middle East in 1957. Today, Indonesian soldiers and military observers are deployed in peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Georgia. As a founding member and active player of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77, the Group of 15, the Developing Eight and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, our commitment to the promotion of international peace and understanding is self-evident.

Indonesia has made key contributions to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in its region, notably in Cambodia and southern Philippines. It continues to actively build peace and stability in the region.

A developing world striving not only for social and economic progress but also for democratization must have a voice on the Security Council. Moderate Islam must have a voice on the Council. Indonesia would be that voice. And that voice will insist — as we now insist — that the fight against terrorism, like the related fight against poverty, can be won. This is not to deny that terrorists are still capable of wreaking havoc on our societies. Just two weeks ago, they struck again in the heart of Jakarta, killing nine innocent civilians and wounding 150 others. We in Indonesia condemn this act of inhuman savagery, mourn the loss of innocent life and share the pain and anger of the wounded and the bereaved families. But we are by no means intimidated. We will bring the perpetrators to justice as we have always done after every terrorist attack.

Our faith remains firm that the fight against terror can be won. The world can be made immensely safer. But the global coalition to defeat terrorism must be inclusive. It must be multilateral and democratic. It must empower the moderates of the world. And it must address the root causes of terrorism: the grievances and the poignant sense of injustice that drive human beings to such depths of despair that they would carry out the most heinous acts of mass murder and destruction. It must address grievances due to a poverty that is the offshoot of social and economic inequity, the affronts of tyranny and corruption, and the failure of States to deliver a standard of living that befits human dignity. Included are grievances due to political oppression, such as the aggression and brutalities that the Palestinian people continue to suffer in the hands of the occupying Power.

For the coalition that would fight terrorism and poverty to be truly multilateral and democratic, it must include the regional organizations, which are envisioned in the United Nations Charter as the pillars of global multilateralism.

The United Nations itself, in extending assistance and services to countries all over the world, needs support at the regional level. This is why we in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are striving to develop a robust partnership with the world Organization. We are confident that this partnership will prosper, as ASEAN evolves into a true community by the year 2020. As a security community, we will assume full responsibility for our security and political stability. As an economic and sociocultural community, we will be a stronger force for development and social integration in the Asia-Pacific region.

Together with our counterparts in two continents, we are building a bridge of cooperation across the Indian Ocean to form a partnership for development. A summit of Asian and African nations will formally establish this strategic partnership in April 2005 in Jakarta.

At the same time, the summit will pay tribute to a watershed event in the cause of equitable international relations. Thus, we will observe the Golden Jubilee of the Asian-African Conference held in Bandung in 1955. Moreover, ASEAN is networking in all directions, with its counterparts in the rest of the Asia-Pacific region, in Latin America and in Europe. We expect this network of regional organizations, in partnership with the United Nations, to be the ultimate form of multilateralism. This network can also help advance a global democratic agenda. To this end, Asia can make a significant contribution.

Today Asia is certainly in the midst of a democratic flowering. A series of successful democratic elections in various Asian countries in recent months has been hailed worldwide as a political miracle that may be of deeper significance than the short-lived Asian economic miracle a decade ago.

But democracy is never a miracle — never a gift, nor something imposed. It is always hard-earned and often the fruit of many sacrifices. And its ultimate worth depends entirely upon us, the people — on whether we have the political maturity, the wisdom and the courage to make it work and make it endure. We in Indonesia are devoutly committed to that end.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alberto Romulo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines.

Mr. Romulo (Philippines): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, as you ably and wisely guide our deliberations at the fifty-ninth session. Allow me also to take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Julian Hunte of Saint Lucia for his successful stewardship of the work of the fifty-eighth session.

The world has changed a great deal since our hopes and aspirations were enshrined in the Charter almost 60 years ago. What has not changed, but remains unaltered, is our collective desire to build a safe, tolerant and secure world, anchored in justice and social progress.

What has not changed is the very spirit and driving force that brought us together — we, the peoples of the United Nations. Those opening words of the Charter remind us that the United Nations is a creation of the peoples of the world. Those words compel us to recall that our Organization has been entrusted by our peoples with the sacred task of translating their aspirations into reality. They are words that tell us that we are assembled today not only as delegates of our Governments, but also as representatives of our peoples. With those words, the Charter freed the world from the notion that only States matter. With those words, the people were placed at the heart of our United Nations.

Today, the technologies and discoveries that make the world smaller and should bring us together are being used to tear us apart. Today, new forms of political, economic and social division directly threaten our people and the values and dreams they hold dear. These threats have the potential to overwhelm the gains of our Organization and to divide our peoples.

All these factors have given rise to clamour for decisive reform in the United Nations. We should start with the basic reform of the structures and relationships that define powers and responsibilities. For our Organization, this means pursuing earnest reforms in the Security Council; the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies; and the Secretariat. But addressing the most basic elements is also the most difficult thing to do.

Any planned reform of the United Nations should be endorsed by consensus by all 191 Member States. Any reform of the Security Council should give due consideration to the views of the five permanent members, as they will have the final say in the matter.

Any reform should also recognize that a country like Japan deserves to be considered for a seat as a permanent member.

We must all put our creative energies to work, spare no effort and ignore no avenue or opportunity in bringing greater peace and progress to our peoples. Religion and religious leaders have a role to play in fostering tolerance and greater understanding among peoples. They bring unique perspectives to the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Inter-faith dialogue between the peoples of different civilizations should also be encouraged. Deep and historic divisions can be healed through a dialogue between peoples of different faiths and civilizations. The Philippines will work with like-minded delegations in support of efforts to broaden such a dialogue.

Our peoples' differences, whether of belief or of culture, should not be a basis for misunderstanding or conflict. But most of all, reform must begin by placing the welfare and interests of the peoples of the world at the forefront our deliberations.

In the 15 minutes that it will take me to deliver my remarks, 60 people will have died of tuberculosis. By the time the curtain falls on a Broadway show, 250 persons, mostly women and children, will have been trafficked into forced servitude or prostitution. By the time we wake up tomorrow morning, 3,000 children will have died of malaria and a further 6,000 children will have perished for lack of clean water.

Instead of having school books in their hands, over 300,000 children in conflict areas have their fingers on the triggers of automatic rifles.

HIV/AIDS kills 3 million people a year; millions of refugees crowd camps. One fifth of the world's population still live in abject poverty, barely subsisting on less than the price of the newspaper sold around the corner from our hotels.

Terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the massive proliferation of small arms directly threaten the people and their livelihood and represent an assault on their dignity.

Critical flashpoints, most of which are in my part of the world, have the potential for armed conflict that would certainly place people and their futures at grave risk.

As a founding Member of the United Nations and as a current member of the Security Council, the Philippines places its faith in the Organization for the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of social progress and better standards of life and the protection of the fundamental rights of individuals.

People antedate the evolution of statehood. As we place people at the centre of the United Nations, I would like to highlight the need to protect their lives and the importance of ensuring their livelihood and promoting their dignity.

We must allow our peoples to live free from fear, to live in a safe and secure world. Terrorism poses a serious threat not only to the lives of our people, but also to the values and ideals that define our societies. Terrorism reduces people to mere pawns in a ruthless game of competing beliefs and ideologies.

The rubble in Jakarta has been cleared. Flowers cover the little graves in Beslan. But the enemies of all peoples are still lurking in the shadows, conspiring and plotting, with evil in their hearts and the blood of innocents on their hands.

The Philippines condemns all forms of terrorism. No cause or dogma can ever justify its use. Long before 11 September 2001, the Philippines and its people suffered from the scourge of terrorism. We have seen the face of terror and felt its deadly touch. We were among the first in our region to join the international war against terror. The Philippines believes that conflicts should be addressed before terrorism can begin to define or exploit them. This can be done by working together with other nations.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo believes that a new kind of peace has to be developed for a new kind of war, waged by terrorists. She proposes a new global alliance to alleviate poverty and remove it as a breeding ground for resentment and conflict.

With the help of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, violent secessionism has given way to peaceful autonomy in southern Philippines. The potential for terrorism to breed has been drastically reduced. In partnership with Malaysia, we are closer to a negotiated peace with the remaining secessionists, who themselves have renounced terror. With Norway as a facilitator, prospects remain for peace talks with

one of the world's few remaining communist rebel groups.

Another important dimension of human security is economic. At the national level, economic security means primarily providing livelihood for the people. In the Philippines, President Arroyo has enshrined that goal in her 10-point programme of action for 2004 to 2010. The programme calls for the creation of 6 million jobs in six years by giving more opportunities to entrepreneurs, tripling the amount of loans to small and medium-size enterprises and developing 1 million to 2 million hectares of land for agribusiness.

If we are to maintain economic security, the international community should also make job creation a priority goal in international economic cooperation. The General Assembly should look more closely at innovative tools that will help spur economic growth, particularly in developing countries. Greater attention should be focused on how micro-credit or microfinance — an area where the Philippines has made significant strides — could serve as an instrument to alleviate the conditions of the poorest of the poor.

Creative ways to solve the lingering debt issue and the spiralling cost of energy should also be considered. We need to ease the burden of debt servicing and to channel those meagre resources to where they are needed most. Each day, developing countries pay the rich nations $717 million in debt service. Every baby born in the developing world already owes $482 at birth. Every year, sub-Saharan Africa pays $10 billion in debt service — four times as much money as the countries in the region spend on health care and education. The wise mobilization of domestic resources, such as remittances for development, should also be carefully studied. Remittances by migrants — much greater than the total amount of overseas development assistance — alleviate the poverty of the family members remaining in their country of origin.

Economic security prospers when the playing field is level for both developed and developing countries. Levelling the economic playing field ensures that the fruits of globalization will benefit the people in terms of better opportunities, more jobs and improved livelihood. International trade, investment and development are crucial tools in raising the people's standard of living. But the people of poor countries continue to face persistent barriers to their products from the developing world. Those barriers exist despite the strictures of the international trading system, emphasizing the need for an open, rule-based multilateral trading system.

Economic crises in developing countries result in immediate threats to human security. When people do not know where their next meal will come from or when their crops will fail, human security is compromised. In an interlinked global economy, crises spread rapidly. The prevention and mitigation of such crises in developing countries also enhances human security in developed countries. A World Bank study shows, for instance, that the total elimination of agricultural subsidies in rich countries would increase rural income in low- and medium-income countries by about $60 billion a year.

Needless to say, international trade policy needs to be fair, not only to farmers of the developed world, but also to their counterparts in the developing countries. As a start, a substantial reduction in agricultural subsidies for farmers in rich countries would go a long way towards helping their fellow agricultural workers beyond their borders. There is also a need for developed countries to implement their commitments to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance. Again, official development assistance is an instrument to help people help themselves — a social responsibility that is more pronounced now, in an era of increasing globalization. The inexorable pace of globalization fuels new phenomena and creates new challenges to human security. The fluidity of capital, technology, culture and even people should be acknowledged as inherent to globalization and should be harnessed for the good of the people.

Democracy and freedom — central elements to ensuring the rights and dignity of the people — should be encouraged and promoted, particularly in countries that are in transition or recovering from conflict. It is in that spirit that the Philippines supports the call for the establishment of a democracy fund. The Philippines is prepared to provide technical support and training in the areas of governance, the administration of justice, electoral processes and similar subjects, with third-party support. We will share our knowledge — a result of our own experience as Asia's first democracy — since we have had to struggle to regain and preserve that very same democracy.

The world should continue to support the people of Iraq in their valiant effort to create a democratic, free, pluralistic and secure nation. The Philippines stands ready to assist in implementing Security Council resolution 1546 (2004) on Iraq, which was unanimously adopted during our presidency of the Council last June. The United Nations has a significant role to play in Iraq in the political process leading to the elections scheduled for January next year, and it deserves the full support of the international community in its efforts to build a stable and peaceful Iraq.

Conflict has devastating effects on the safety and security of people. The deliberate targeting of innocent civilians as victims is increasingly being used as a weapon of war and as a tool of terrorists. The movement of people across borders reinforces the interdependence of countries, facilitates the transfer of skills and knowledge and stimulates economic growth and development. In order to protect the security of migrants, we must give them the legal status that will enable them to gain access to basic services and will ensure the protection of fundamental rights. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families entered into force on 1 July 2003. We take this opportunity to call on all our friends to make every effort to accede to the Convention.

The interdependence and interlinkages among the peoples of the world require that human security should top the agendas of local, national, regional and global governance. Human security addresses the challenges of the twenty-first century, responds to our peoples' aspirations as enshrined in our Charter and reinvigorates the United Nations in the process.

Finally, in a world where people are sometimes reduced to images on a screen and their suffering distilled into pixels and fonts, perhaps we should again be reminded that, when we gave life to the United Nations almost 60 years ago, we ushered in a new era in the human saga, embarking on our historic journey with the words: "We the peoples of the United Nations ...".

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Nizar Obaid Madani, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Madani (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to express to you, Sir, and to your friendly country, Gabon, our sincere congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. We are confident that you will lead the work of this session in a highly capable and efficient manner. I should also like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Lucia, who, as President of the last session of the Assembly, managed its affairs with wisdom and skill.

On this occasion, I should like to convey the deep appreciation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan for his sustained, diligent and commendable efforts to maintain international peace and security and to revitalize the role of the United Nations and enhance its functions, capacities, credibility and effectiveness. In that regard, the speech given by the Secretary-General last week is notable and praiseworthy, as it provided a blueprint and guidelines for enhancing the resiliency of the international order. It is crucial when tackling global issues to bridge the gaps in the international order so that measures are not applied selectively or arbitrarily.

The accelerating global changes and the grave challenges facing the international community today necessitate more than ever a scrutiny of the working methods of the United Nations, as well as the structures and functions of its organs, in order to enhance its ability to prevent and resolve conflicts and to maintain international peace and security.

In that respect, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports the call for reform of the Security Council, in particular, an increase in its membership in order to improve geographical representation, a greater transparency in its work, a halt to the application of double standards and the adoption of measures that will enhance the credibility of the Council's work and guarantee respect for, and compliance with, its resolutions.

Among the important reforms needed in our Organization is restriction of the veto power. Permanent members of the Security Council should not be allowed to invoke their right of veto in cases where proposed resolutions and procedures are adopted to implement previously agreed resolutions.

It is also imperative to establish an optimal balance between the General Assembly and the Security Council, to enhance the role of the Economic and Social Council and to establish closer coordination

among the various United Nations funds, programmes and activities.

We reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations and the multilateral international order. Today, more than ever, the international community is in dire need of a unified and mutually supportive stance in order to achieve just solutions to the current problems we all face. It is through respect for the shared values, traditions and principles that are deeply rooted in the conscience of all mankind that we can promote constructive cooperation and the achievement of security, peace, stability and prosperity for all nations.

Humanity has been afflicted by the growing danger of terrorism. It is a phenomenon that does not differentiate between societies. Increasingly, terrorist groups have been crossing borders and expanding their networks into different regions, nations and continents. Today, it is therefore critical that we exert every effort possible to increase international cooperation to combat terrorism and confront those who instigate and finance it.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia rejects terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and is cooperating with the international community to eliminate that global evil. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has affirmed its full support for the Security Council resolutions relating to terrorism. In that regard, Saudi Arabia has taken the necessary steps to close any loopholes in its domestic regulations on charitable fund-raising activities that might allow such funds to be used for illicit purposes. We have established a public commission tasked with supervising and organizing the activities of all charitable and relief organizations with a view to streamlining their operations and preventing those with bad intentions and evil objectives from using their humanitarian funds for illegal purposes.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was among the first signatories of the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism and other similar agreements emanating from the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council. In addition, it has acceded to nine other international anti-terrorism conventions and agreements. In that regard, the Government of Saudi Arabia has recently taken a series of measures that are indicative of its seriousness and determination to fight terrorism. Its strategy of preventive action to forestall criminal acts has already been successful in the fight against this deadly scourge and has earned the praise and admiration of the international community and international organizations.

It is important to remember that crimes committed by a handful of criminals and misguided felons cannot justify incriminating a whole society or an entire culture. Terrorism can strike any city and target any interests, regardless of the nationality, religion or ethnic origin of the victims. Terrorism is a global phenomenon that calls for joint action and cooperation by all countries and requires the close collaboration of concerned international organizations to effectively find the means to confront it and eliminate it.

It is on the basis of the foregoing that I am pleased to announce before this gathering that the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has decided to host an international conference to combat terrorism, to be held in Riyadh from 5 to 8 February 2005. Its purpose is to exchange information and experience in the field of combating terrorism and to see how we can cooperate with other countries in the fight against that universal threat. We also intend to use this excellent opportunity to learn about scientific and practical techniques relevant not only to combating terrorism, but also to the prevention of money-laundering, drug trafficking and arms smuggling. The conference will also provide a good forum in which to study the culture and psychology of terrorists and the structure of terrorist organizations.

Official invitations to the anti-terrorism conference have already been extended to concerned international organizations as well as to countries that have suffered or are suffering from terrorism. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes the participation of all those invited and hopes that the outcome and final recommendations of the conference will constitute an important addition and a great support to international efforts to eradicate terrorism and address the root causes of that dangerous phenomenon.

The setback in the peace process and the mounting wave of violence and extremism in our region are largely attributable to the Israeli Government's pursuit of policies that are totally incompatible with the fundamental principles of the peace process, notably the principle of land for peace. Israel's actions are in contravention of Security Council resolutions — in particular, resolutions 242 (1967) and

338 (1973) — and the road map. They are incompatible with the United States Administration's vision of two States — an Israeli State and an independent Palestinian State — living side by side.

The Arab peace initiative continues to stand as a credible basis for the security and stability of all the peoples of the region because it ensures a lasting, just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is therefore incumbent upon all of us to exert our utmost efforts to put the peace process back on track. It is particularly important to push the peace process forward after it has stalled and after the humanitarian plight of the Palestinian people — which should be a goad to the conscience of the international community — has been met with indifference.

Furthermore, peace cannot be achieved by unilateral Israeli measures that create new realities on the ground and that are designed to prejudice the final outcome of any political negotiations on the delicate issue of a final settlement. The Palestinian question cannot be solved, nor can the Arab-Israeli conflict be ended, through the use of excessive force — aerial bombardment, guided missiles, assassination of Palestinian activists, destruction of infrastructure, usurpation of property, violation of rights and the imposition of collective punishment. Peace will be achieved and security will prevail only when United Nations resolutions are implemented, the provisions of international law are respected and applied and the principles of justice and equality are observed.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemns the continuous escalation against the Palestinian people and the Israeli Government's insistence on establishing and expanding its settlements. We also condemn the continued construction of the separation wall that has annexed extensive Palestinian lands in unprecedented defiance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which acknowledged the illegality of the wall and ordered Israel to dismantle it, as well as the General Assembly resolution that followed that opinion, effectively demonstrating the consensus of the international community on the issue.

However, if Israel is serious about withdrawing from Gaza and about dismantling its settlements there, we stress that such an action should proceed in coordination with the Palestinian Authority, in conformity with the requirements of the road map and under the supervision of the Quartet. The proposed withdrawal should come about as a first step towards a complete and full withdrawal from all the Palestinian lands, including Al-Quds.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is closely monitoring efforts to eliminate all forms of weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East and to keep it free from all such lethal weapons. In that respect, we call upon the international community to adopt an even-handed approach, refrain from applying double standards, assume its legal and moral responsibilities and urge the Israeli Government to refrain from the development of its nuclear programmes, as well as subject its nuclear installations to the inspection and safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We are profoundly distressed and gravely concerned at the deteriorating security situation in some parts of Iraq, where tragic incidents, heinous acts of violence, and the horrific kidnapping of innocent people seem to be daily occurrences. Faced with this appalling reality, we can only urge the Iraqi people and all Iraqi factions to mend fences and work hand in hand to support the efforts of their transitional Government to establish the security, safety and well-being of their country; preserve its national unity and independence and ensure the restoration of Iraq's effective and positive role in the international arena. We also call upon the United Nations to play a greater role in assisting the Iraqi Government to meet the requirements of the ongoing political process, including by conducting general elections, which we hope will lead to a permanent legitimate Government, and proceeding with reconstruction efforts.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has presented some ideas regarding the deployment of Islamic troops in Iraq. With the consent of the Iraqi Government and under United Nations supervision, we would like such troops not to supplement, but to replace, the multilateral forces. Those ideas, however, have not materialized, although their basic premise deserves consideration and follow-up.

With respect to developments in the brotherly country of the Sudan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is profoundly moved by the humanitarian tragedy in Darfur and supports the efforts of the Government of the Sudan to restore stability in that region. We support the Sudan's cooperation with relief and humanitarian organizations and others in addressing the

humanitarian situation resulting from the crisis. We hope that the efforts of the Government of the Sudan and those of the African Union will be given sufficient time to restore security to the region and to ensure the well-being of its people.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has initiated an ongoing airlift operation, using Saudi cargo planes, to provide direct humanitarian assistance to the Darfur region. This assistance includes medical and food supplies, tents and power generators. Moreover, there are Saudi relief teams in the region who have established clinics and hospitals inside camps and equipped them with doctors, medicine, medical supplies and tests. In addition, wells have been dug to provide the camps with drinking water, and electricity is being supplied.

Human development and economic prosperity are major keys to achieving a better future for developing countries. To reach that objective, developed and developing nations can work together to achieve great success. My country has contributed to this process by adopting and implementing numerous development projects and by extending generous assistance to developing and least developed countries through national, regional and international agencies, in order to help them in overcoming the problems of poverty and underdevelopment.

We appreciate the concern expressed by the Group of Eight at their summit in Sea Island, Georgia, in the United States, regarding the future of the Middle East and their desire to help the countries of the region develop and make progress. However, we believe that political and economic reforms should not be imposed or dictated from outside; rather, international assistance in this area should serve as a catalyst to help these nations initiate their own reforms. Outside interference on the question of reform can only result in disrupting and stalling processes that are already under way.

For reforms to be effective and lasting, they should reflect the actual needs of the societies concerned and should conform with a given State's stage of development. Of course, there is much that the advanced countries can do to help in this process, especially in the areas of investment, trade liberalization, international economic cooperation and the opening of their markets. We believe that removing protective measures, such as trade barriers and tariffs, and eliminating preferential treatment that hinders the ability of developing countries to enter the markets of developed countries can go far in achieving desired development goals. There is, moreover, a need to make the necessary effort to help those countries to overcome their problems and their chronic political conflicts.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, based on its position of responsibility and its effective role in the international oil market, has consistently sought to meet its obligations to maintain stable oil markets and ensure continuing world economic growth. To that end, it has increased its production capacity to ensure sufficient supply and to control unnatural oil price surges.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia took the initiative of establishing the International Energy Forum and hosting its general secretariat in Riyadh. The Forum has become a platform for discussing ways and means of cooperation and dialogue between consumer and producer countries, whether within or outside the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Those countries should seek to intensify their cooperation in order to ensure stable markets for the strategic commodity of petroleum, and to guarantee the continued growth of the global economy.

In view of the tragic security events on the international scene, the world needs, more than ever, concerted international efforts to increase dialogue and raise the level of understanding, mutual contact and familiarity among nations and cultures. The world needs to embark on a serious effort to propagate a culture of peace, in order to achieve for our fellow human beings the dignity and prosperity they deserve. We need to do more to put an end to the wave of violence and work for the achievement of justice and the termination of racial discrimination.

God Almighty said in the Holy Qur'an: "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, And made you into Nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you."

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Al-Alawi Bin Abdulla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman.

Mr. Abdulla (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, I am pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of this session. We assure you that we will sincerely cooperate with you in order to contribute to the success of this session and to the realization of the desirable objectives to which we all aspire. We all hope to serve humankind and the cause of international peace and security.

I also take this opportunity, Sir, to express my heartfelt thanks to his Excellency Mr. Julian Robert Hunte, your predecessor and President of the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, for all his efforts to ensure the success of that session and of the concurrent resumptions of the tenth emergency special session.

This session of the General Assembly has been convened under very complex and difficult circumstances. There has been a clear decline in the international community's ability to unite and to reach consensus on solutions to the diverse problems that have undermined international diplomacy. Those problems have deprived preventive diplomacy of its ability to create an environment of international understanding conducive to agreement on issues of common interest to all peoples.

We believe that there is an urgent need for the international community to review both regional and international policies and to put an end to the sense of uncertainty, pessimism and vagueness surrounding the work of the United Nations. States that can influence international policy have a moral and material responsibility to take the initiative to review those policies and create an environment of cooperation among international stakeholders.

The region of the Middle East is the focus of global attention, because of its potential impact on international stability. We share the interest shown by many countries in the situation in the Middle East, which is prompted by the need to find solutions to the political and social problems facing the region.

Here, it is worth noting that the Group of Eight, at its meeting on Sea Island in the state of Georgia in the United States on 9 June 2004, focused their interest on the Middle East. In principle, we welcome their position since we believe that closer cooperation is essential within the Group of Eight and the countries of the Middle East to consider how to prioritize the discussion of the political issues that remain the main obstacle to the march of the people of the Middle East towards progress and stability.

The problem of Palestine and Israel's continued occupation of Arab territories in Syria and Lebanon cannot be put on the back burner indefinitely. Therefore, we should seek fair and just solutions to those problems. The road map announced on 30 April 2003 was welcomed by the Arab countries but has yet to be implemented. We therefore call on the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations — the members of the Quartet that sponsored the road map — to fulfil their commitment to the Middle East.

The Security Council adopted resolution 1546 (2004), by which it transferred sovereignty in Iraq from the Coalition forces to an interim Iraqi Government. It was a milestone in the development of the situation in Iraq. However, the deteriorating security situation in Iraq remains a cause of deep concern. We believe that the interim Iraqi Government is making great efforts to restore normalcy and stability. We support the Government of Iraq in its endeavours to unify all Iraqis around a common agenda. We feel that certain successes have been achieved through the adoption of political dialogue, and that it is essential to Iraq to expand that dialogue.

In the Sudan, the Government has been making commendable efforts to achieve stability in Darfur. We look forward to ongoing cooperation between the African Union and the Sudanese Government. The Government's willingness to implement certain measures proposed by the United Nations and to cooperate with the Security Council to implement resolution 1564 (2004) deserves our support and commendation.

In our view, the United Nations should provide financial and technical support to the efforts of the African Union and the Sudanese Government to achieve peace in Darfur. Moreover, we believe that any action by the Security Council against the Sudan would be harmful and would undermine the United Nations ability to work effectively on the ground. It would, moreover, hamper the efforts of the Sudan and the African Union to achieve peace.

All human beings share this Earth and should work together to develop and preserve its resources. It is highly important that the international community take note of the environmental changes taking place

everywhere, such as the destructive storms, floods and fires that have had tremendously harmful effects on all humanity. Those phenomena may be caused by human transgression and destruction of environmental diversity. That is why the international community is called upon to study the environment and do whatever it can to stem the phenomenon of desertification and drought in order to preserve great global sources of food.

Recent international policies have resulted in the emergence of serious types of terrorist acts. One of the most horrific of such acts was the hostage-taking in a school in Beslan in North Ossetia in the Russian Federation. We strongly condemn that terrorist act and express our solidarity with the Russian Government in fighting such attacks. We believe that the international community should show solidarity in the face of terrorism everywhere and engage in in-depth consideration of the phenomenon. The convening of an international conference to consider terrorism is a good idea, since the outcome of such a conference could be an important tool that would help defeat the phenomenon.

The Sultanate of Oman believes that States' accession and commitment to disarmament treaties and conventions would enhance and maintain international peace and security. In that context, we should seriously consider the possibility of establishing collective mechanisms for arms monitoring and control, based on unified standards acceptable to all, be it in the field of weapons of mass destruction or that of conventional weapons. Otherwise, the role of the world order will remain limited to theoretical studies or to drawing attention to the dangers of the arms race to development, the environment and international peace and security.

The world stockpile of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, could destroy human life on our planet many times over. That is why the Sultanate of Oman has signed most conventions on disarmament and arms control, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.

The emergence of globalization and the World Trade Organization raised the hopes and aspirations of peoples for an era of international cooperation that would broaden sustainable development. However, the results of the new developments have been an amalgamation of democracy and dictatorship, of human rights and enslavement, of great prosperity and extreme poverty, of the provision of advanced health care side by side with fatal contagious diseases, of free trade and world trade monopoly, and of a rise in the price of industrial products and a decline in the prices of the raw materials required to maintain their production. The amalgam has led to economic imbalances. Is that what we sought to achieve?

The High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change was established in the context of an initiative by the Secretary-General to seek ways of reforming the Organization, and in particular of expanding the permanent membership of the Security Council. We would welcome such an expansion in order to broaden the base of participation in the Council's decision-making process. However, the permanent members should work to create an international climate conducive to an expansion that reflects the international will. Conditions of membership should be reviewed to include aspects that conform to international changes so as to guarantee equitable representation and international consensus if possible.

We believe that it is high time for permanent members of the Security Council to review their own attitudes and policies in the Council in order to facilitate the required restructuring. We believe that the excessive adoption of Security Council resolutions on secondary international issues undermines the prestige of the Council and reduces the ability of the United Nations to deal with priority questions that are important to international peace and security. We believe that the Security Council must not interfere in the internal affairs of Member States, so as to preserve the international consensus in addressing issues related to international peace and security.

The Sultanate of Oman would like to express its support to the efforts made by the United Nations. We would particularly like to express our support to the Secretary-General and to the role he plays in conducting the affairs of this Organization. Our delegation will spare no effort to ensure the success of this session, in order to realize the objectives to which we all aspire.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sodiq Safoev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Mr. Safoev (Uzbekistan): Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you, Sir, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Gabon, on your election as the President of the General Assembly and to wish you every success in this important position. I would also like to extend our appreciation to Mr. Julian Hunte for the excellent organization of the previous session.

The serious challenges to global stability and sustainable development that the international community faces vindicate the urgent need to further develop the legal and institutional foundations of multilateral cooperation. There is no doubt that the central role in coordinating these efforts belongs to the United Nations. It is important, today as never before, to define the direction of the dynamic adaptation of the United Nations to current realities, based on the Organization's unique experience of over half a century, and to find adequate responses to the pressing issues of the contemporary world.

Developments in the Central Asian region provide a vivid demonstration of the intermingling of the contradictory processes that are unfolding around the globe. The aspirations of the peoples of Central Asia to fully integrate into the world community, to create conditions for sustainable stability and economic development are facing serious challenges. The region is faced with a combination of transnational threats, namely terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking. Similar patterns can be observed in other regions of the world as well.

Not a single day passes without terrorist acts taking place somewhere in the world. It is obvious and undeniable that international terrorism has challenged the civilized world. It makes no exceptions and does not distinguish between places, nationalities, religions or social systems. It sows death and devastation in both affluent and developing nations. We need to admit that international terrorism, which is capable of quickly transforming and adapting to the changing circumstances of the contemporary world, is trying to impose its terms and conditions and keep entire regions in fear.

From the outset, Uzbekistan has firmly and vigorously supported the efforts of the anti-terrorist coalition aimed at eradicating transnational threats. The political leadership of Uzbekistan is deeply committed to the fight against this plague of the twenty-first century and calls for a consolidation of the international community's efforts in this area.

However, effectively fighting international terrorism requires, above all, combating its ideological sources. It is vital to oppose the ideology of extremism and fanaticism and to outlaw militant radical religious groups that nurture international terrorism.

At the same time, Uzbekistan strongly opposes any kind of allegations or assertions linking international terrorism with the ever-growing religion of Islam, which has made an immense contribution to the history of humanity. Uzbekistan, home of the greatest thinkers and philosophers of the East, is adamantly pursuing an all-out support of traditional, enlightened Islam. Only by promoting and encouraging ideas of an enlightened and tolerant Islam can we effectively withstand militant, politicized extremist factions and avert further confrontations in the world.

Uzbekistan holds that, in reviewing the urgent issues of global security, the regional agenda should be given priority. Only by means of secure and stable regions can we gradually move towards global security. The establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in Central Asia remains one of the priorities of our foreign policy. We again call upon the permanent members of the Security Council to develop — in cooperation with the States of the region — a consolidated position on the provisions of the treaty and its protocol. We trust that the establishment of this nuclear-weapons-free zone would become an important element of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Many issues of regional development are directly linked to the processes taking place in Afghanistan. We believe that Afghanistan is historically and geographically a part of Central Asia. Uzbekistan has been giving all possible assistance to the Afghan people for the social and economic reconstruction of the country and its harmonious integration into regional structures. The Government of Uzbekistan, in cooperation with United Nations agencies, has set up and is successfully implementing a delivery mechanism for international humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan via Uzbekistan. To date, over 2.5 million tons of such cargo has passed through our territory. In addition, we are doing all we can to reduce transit costs and improve the service infrastructure.

In light of the continuous threat of narcotics proliferation from Afghanistan, Central Asia, on the

frontline of combating narco-aggression, is facing the problem of effectively countering this global menace. We look forward to the international community's firm and continuous support of Uzbekistan's initiative to establish a Central Asian regional information and coordination centre to combat transborder crime related to illegal drug trafficking.

The United Nations has been present in Uzbekistan for over a decade. During this period, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has carried out numerous important projects aimed at strengthening the country's potential in implementing reforms, protecting the environment and creating sustainable sources of income. We truly appreciate this.

In this regard, we look forward to assistance from UNDP and other United Nations agencies in implementing Uzbekistan's initiative to establish a Central Asian common market. This would contribute not only to creating a large and robust regional market and attracting more foreign investment and modern technologies, but also to properly addressing the social and environmental problems of Central Asia, including its sustainable development and economic prosperity.

Overcoming the transportation and communication isolation of the region is another top priority. In that context, I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the multilateral initiative to establish a trans-Afghan transport corridor, which would link Central Asia with the Persian Gulf. The implementation of that project would significantly expand trade and economic relations and fundamentally improve the region's economic prospects.

We agree with the view of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, that the present juncture is of crucial importance for the United Nations. There is no other multilateral forum similar to the United Nations, in which countries that differ from one another in terms of cultural and historical heritage, economic potential and geographic location can work together as equal partners.

In the context of the current, increasingly complex globalization processes, the strengthening of the Security Council is of paramount significance. Uzbekistan supports the enlargement of the Security Council in both categories of membership, taking into account the political and economic capabilities of countries, geographical representation and other criteria. We reiterate our support for the inclusion of Germany and Japan in the Security Council as permanent members.

In conclusion, I should like once again to underscore the fact that Uzbekistan is confident that the United Nations will retain its role as the main pillar of the international security and cooperation architecture. We believe that the invaluable potential of the United Nations, which withstood all the upheavals of the previous century, will long serve the cause of consolidating our efforts in the face of global challenges.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on The Honourable Keith Desmond Knight, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica.

Mr. Knight (Jamaica): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. You can be assured of Jamaica's fullest support and cooperation during your tenure.

The outgoing President, Julian Hunte of Saint Lucia, deserves commendation for his energy and outstanding leadership during the fifty-eighth session, during which he achieved significant accomplishments, particularly in the area of the revitalization of the General Assembly. He leaves a legacy of a strengthened presidency and a good foundation for further operational improvements in the work of the Assembly and in its relations with other organs.

In reviewing the developments of the past year, we note that the anticipated growth in the global economy has been dampened by uncertainties arising from macro-economic imbalances in larger economies and the impact of increased oil prices. Political instability in many regions of the world has not abated and, in some cases, has increased to critical levels. Many developing countries continue to struggle for survival in the globalized economy, especially in the face of changing commodity regimes, the erosion of preferences and unfavourable market conditions. The gap between rich and poor continues to widen. There may be some glimmers of hope, but more needs to be done to correct existing imbalances and to broaden opportunities for all to share in global prosperity. Formidable challenges remain for developing countries.

In our part of the world, those challenges have taken on grave new proportions in the wake of the recent spate of hurricanes which have devastated the Caribbean and affected several States of the United States of America. In the Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, the Cayman Islands, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti and my own country, Jamaica, the loss of life and the scale of destruction and damage to infrastructure, property and means of livelihood have been catastrophic. What had taken several generations to build has suddenly vanished and will take years to recover. The case of Grenada, which was virtually obliterated, is particularly striking. For those who have had doubts about the reality of the vulnerability of small island States, these recent events should be convincing evidence.

In Jamaica, we are completing our estimates of the damage from Hurricane Ivan, which struck on 10 September, virtually on the anniversary date of Hurricane Gilbert, still painfully fresh in our memory. On behalf of the Government and the people of Jamaica, I extend deep appreciation to the Member States, the agencies of the United Nations, and other international and non-governmental organizations which have given assistance. We have launched an international appeal to support our national efforts for immediate and long-term recovery. Apart from the provision of emergency relief supplies, there is a need for concessionary financing to the affected countries, so as to facilitate medium- to long-term reconstruction. One means of doing this would be through the establishment of a special fund.

In the context of these recent developments, the 10-year review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States, to be held in Mauritius in January 2005, is a timely opportunity for the international community to undertake special consideration of the vulnerability of small island States. We expect the Mauritius review to adopt concrete measures and call for serious consideration to be given to mechanisms to support the recovery and reconstruction efforts of small island developing States in the aftermath of natural disasters.

What should also command attention are the dangers posed by climate change and global warming and the urgent need for global action within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol. It is imperative that all States accede to the Protocol.

It is accepted that the benefits of globalization are not being fully realized, especially in the area of international trade. We should seek to harness its potential to the benefit of developed and developing countries alike. Interdependence makes this an imperative. Global economic health requires better management of economic arrangements at all levels, to ensure a more equitable distribution of global prosperity.

The situation of small developing economies makes a compelling case. From any objective standpoint, there is a need for special and differential treatment in relation to trade, the flow of financial resources, the transfer of technology and the promotion of industrial development. The gap between rich and poor must be narrowed. Otherwise, many developing countries will continue in a downward spiral of declining income and increased poverty, with painful consequences such as political and social instability and recurring humanitarian crises. While there is no substitute for self-reliance, on the basis of the principle of shared responsibility, there is a role for all participants within the global economic system.

That is why international cooperation for development should be given a central place in our deliberations. There is a need to create institutional capacity in the United Nations for the direction and coordination of policies affecting finance, trade and technology and for formulating the overall policies guiding international economic cooperation. Such a mechanism could forge effective linkages with the Bretton Woods institutions in order to manage and promote coherence in international economic programmes and policies. It should effectively respond to economic crises as they arise and apply remedies for imbalances and disequilibrium in the global economy.

Some tentative steps have been taken in that direction in the wake of the Monterrey Conference, but much more is required to reform governance in the international economic system to make it more democratic, transparent and responsive to the real needs and priorities of developing countries.

The cycle of violence resulting from war and terrorism is a troubling phenomenon of our time. International security is dangerously at risk. What is clear to us is that violence and the use of force cannot be the answer. We must embrace multilateralism and

insist that international relations be guided by the rule of law as the basis for our collective security.

Against that background, the necessary steps must be taken to strengthen multilateralism. The United Nations must be our instrument of choice. There is no viable alternative to the Organization, and it can be made as effective as it needs to be only if it is given the powers and resources that are required. We must continue to nourish and strengthen it and make adaptations in the face of changing realities to improve its effectiveness and enhance its credibility. Reform could begin with the Security Council, to make it more representative in membership, more democratic in its decision-making and more accountable and transparent in its operations. These are necessary for its effectiveness and legitimacy. We look forward to receiving the recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

The improvement of international security depends on our finding durable solutions to regional conflicts and disputes. In Africa, there is a need to expedite relief for humanitarian emergencies, to promote initiatives aimed at resolving internecine conflicts and to advance the struggle for economic and social progress. We are distressed by the deterioration in the political and humanitarian situation in the Darfur region of the Sudan, and we support constructive efforts to bring an end to the disruption and the bloodshed. We commend the role of the African Union aimed at resolving the crisis.

We continue to call for good sense and wisdom to defuse the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Jamaica believes that only through a process of political accommodation and the settlement of legitimate claims and grievances, on the basis of justice and legality, can there be any hope for a durable peace.

The war in Iraq has opened up further complexities and further divisions and is becoming a dangerous source of continuing conflict. A political solution is needed to bring about national reconciliation and peace.

Small countries face particular dangers in maintaining stability and security. I am referring to the increasing production, distribution and proliferation of small arms and light weapons and of sophisticated ammunition. These represent our greatest security threat. Small States do not produce these weapons, but they have become the principal victims of them. The influx of these weapons through various illicit channels is fuelling civil conflict and criminal violence whose extent and intensity beleaguer and often overwhelm national security forces. It is estimated in the 2004 Small Arms Survey that the proliferation and misuse of small arms contributes annually to approximately 200,000 to 270,000 civilian deaths, 40 per cent of which are concentrated in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Equally disturbing to us is the insufficient appreciation of these dangers by those countries that are the producers and source of the weapons. We maintain that such States have a duty to prevent illicit transfers beyond their borders. Additionally, we need more effective cooperation to regulate and restrict the movement of these weapons and to have effective registration and monitoring of transfers, operating within a framework of legally binding obligations.

For that reason, it is urgent that we move to conclude the negotiations for an international convention to achieve those objectives. We make this demand for action on the basis of the principle of the equal right to security for all States. The threats and dangers we face are as valid as those arising from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These also demand collective action; and, in this, Jamaica has been unrelenting in its support of effective measures aimed at curtailing the spread of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

The year 2004 was declared the International Year for the Commemoration of the Struggle Against Slavery and its Abolition. Our history makes this a special commemoration. We also celebrate the 200th anniversary of the independence of Haiti. The Haitian revolution was an achievement of immense historical importance that significantly influenced the shaping of the modern world. It established the first free nation in the Western Hemisphere, and it struck the first decisive blow that eventually brought about the overthrow of the system of slavery in the Americas. The revolution was a story of heroism and triumph, creating a legacy that has sustained the Haitian people during a long and often lonely struggle for survival over the years, in the harsh realties of a hostile world of racism and discrimination.

Sadly, the bicentennial celebration has been overshadowed by circumstances of instability and

political crisis that continue even now. The events of February still cast a shadow and leave lingering concerns about how the democratically elected President demitted office. The sequence of events and the timing of the Security Council in reacting to the crisis were unfortunate. At the same time, Jamaica recognizes that Haiti requires the support and assistance of the international community, which must be sustained over the long term to ensure its effectiveness. The rebuilding of democracy and the creation of a stable social, economic and political order cannot be accomplished overnight, and therefore it should be pursued with perseverance and the commitment of the necessary resources.

We share the anguish and grief of the people of Haiti at the tragic loss of life and devastation caused by the recent hurricane. The Caribbean Community will continue to do its part in providing emergency assistance.

This year, we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the International Seabed Authority. For all of us, and for Jamaica, that is a significant milestone in the quiet evolution and promotion of a legal regime for the seabed, which embodies the principle of the common heritage of mankind. What we, as a community, can take from this to other spheres of international relations is the importance of upholding the rule of law and the pre-eminence of the principles of justice and equity. The Secretary-General rightly emphasized the importance of those norms last Tuesday when introducing his report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1).

The international community should not stand idly by in the presence of violations of international law and the promotion of doctrines that run counter to the principles of multilateralism. That is why Jamaica asks of this fifty-ninth session that all States recommit themselves to the principles on which the Organization was founded to promote peace, equality and justice for all its Members. Let us take the necessary steps to put those principles into practice and to make them the foundation of our policies and programmes. Our universal objective must be to implement the noble ideals to which we subscribe, not just to articulate them.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Choe Su Hon, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Choe Su Hon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Korean; English text provided by the delegation*): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. Ping, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. I believe that your skilful leadership of this session will yield fruitful results. I also appreciate the active efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to ensure the central role of the United Nations in addressing major international issues.

Four years have passed since we marked the beginning of the new century. However, humankind is still confronted with grave challenges in its efforts to realize the aspirations of peoples to build a peaceful and prosperous world.

Unilateralism and high-handedness are becoming increasingly evident, giving rise to aggression, arbitrariness and instability in many parts of the world. Consequently, the vicious circle in which the sovereignty and interests of weak and small countries are trampled for the sake of the exclusive interests of certain other countries continues unabated.

Today, the main factors undermining international peace and stability are unilateralism and high-handed acts based on the logic of power. The challenges facing humankind today require, more urgently than ever, United Nations Member States to strengthen their joint efforts to seek to ensure equitable international relations based on multilateralism that fully observe the universal principles of respect for sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and mutual benefit.

One of the regions where unilateralism and high-handedness are most rampant is North-East Asia — to be more specific, the Korean peninsula. On the Korean peninsula, the national division forcibly brought about by outside forces has continued for more than half a century, and the danger of war is snowballing, owing to extreme attempts by the United States to isolate and stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to threats of pre-emptive strikes against it.

At this very moment, all kinds of sophisticated war equipment are being deployed in and around the

Korean peninsula, targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The acute political and military situation prevailing in and around the Korean peninsula proves clearly once again how right it was of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to have built up its strong self-defensive military power to prevent war and ensure peace, upholding the Songun policy of the respected General Kim Jong Il.

The more vicious the attempts of outside forces to isolate and stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the higher our army and people, firmly united around their leader, hold up the banner of Songun and push ahead with their struggle to build a prosperous and powerful State, with hope for the future and devotion to the socialist cause.

The Songun policy — the independent policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — serves as a reliable deterrent to ensure peace and security, not only on the Korean peninsula, but also in North-East Asia and the rest of the world. We feel great pride and self-confidence in that respect.

The reunification of the country is a prerequisite for achieving a durable peace on the Korean peninsula, and we are steadfast in our determination to achieve national reunification, independently, on the basis of the North-South Joint Declaration of 15 June.

That Joint Declaration is one of national independence, as well as a milestone of reunification indicating the path towards national reconciliation, collaboration and reunification.

Various actions aimed at national co-prosperity were begun in accordance with the lofty spirit of the Joint Declaration. The connecting of railways and roads has proceeded, linking up the once-severed main artery of the country; contacts and mutual travel at all levels increased; and inter-Korean economic cooperation has been guaranteed at the institutional level.

It is regrettable, however, that that tortuous process of reconciliation and cooperation between the north and the south of Korea was not sustained until durable peace and reunification could be achieved. That is because the process is unwelcome to the United States, which is therefore dead-set against improved relations and the ongoing cooperative activities, which are taking place at all levels between the north and the south of Korea.

The United States should no longer hamper the efforts of the north and the south of Korea to achieve national reconciliation, collaboration and reunification.

No matter how the situation may change in the future, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to strive to overcome all the challenges of the anti-reunification forces within and without, and to open up a broad path leading to the independent reunification of the country through national cooperation, based on the great proposition, "By our nation itself".

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify once again the principled stand of our Government regarding the nuclear issue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

As I have made clear time and again from this rostrum, the nuclear issue is the product of the deep-rooted hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea pursued by the United States for more than half a century. In other words, given the fact that the current United States Administration, which is accustomed to rejecting our system, has been attempting to eliminate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by force, while designating it part of an "axis of evil" and a target for pre-emptive nuclear strikes, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been left with no other option than to possess a nuclear deterrent.

Peace is very precious to our people, who have been living for more than half a century with the heartbreaking pain of national division, forcibly brought about by outside forces, and under constant threat from the world's only super-Power.

Our people aspire to peace more than others, but they never beg for peace. The peace that they want to achieve is the peace of an independent life, not the peace of slaves, deprived of freedom.

The confrontation on the Korean peninsula today is, in essence, a confrontation between foreign forces intruding into someone's home and the owners of that home struggling to defend it.

The nuclear deterrent capability of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea constitutes a legitimate means of self-defence to counter the ever-

growing nuclear threat of the United States and its aggression against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as a reliable means to defend the sovereignty, peace and security of the country.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is our goal, and it is the consistent position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to address peacefully the nuclear issue between our country and the United States through dialogue and negotiation.

If the United States were to renounce practically its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the cessation of its nuclear threats, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would, accordingly, be willing to scrap its nuclear deterrent.

On the basis of that position, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea proposed a package solution underpinned by the word-for-word and action-for-action principle aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue. As the first step towards that end, we offered the flexible "reward for freeze" proposal.

In this regard, at the third round of the six-party talks last June, the countries concerned shared the view that it was important that both sides adhere to the word-for-word and action-for-action principle and the "corresponding measures for freeze" approach, and reached an agreement.

The "reward for freeze" proposal provides for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to freeze all nuclear-weapon-related facilities and the output from their operations, on the condition that the United States abandon its hostile policy, in particular its demands relating to the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of our nuclear programme and, at the same time, that it lift its economic sanctions and blockade against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, remove the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from its list of the sponsors of terrorism and participate in an energy compensation scheme involving two million kilowatts of capacity.

By offering this proposal, it is our intention, first, to build mutual confidence, and, eventually, to resolve the nuclear issue fundamentally by addressing each other's concerns and meeting respective demands step by step, on the basis of simultaneous actions, given that the current situation is characterized by hostile relations between the two countries and extreme distrust.

The proposed "reward for freeze" process would be a confidence-building measure between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. Such confidence will be possible only when the United States rewards us for imposing a freeze.

It is only natural that everything should have a beginning and an order. From that point of view, our freeze will be the first step towards the eventual dismantling of our nuclear programme. Of course, the freeze will be followed by objective verification.

In order to further clarify our will to dismantle the nuclear deterrent, we had intended to include in our freeze a halt to the manufacture, testing and transfer of nuclear weapons. The United States, however, disregarding the common understanding and agreement reached at the third round of six-party talks, has further intensified its hostile and increasingly overt acts against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, even openly announcing that there would be no reward for the freezing and dismantling of our nuclear facilities. Most recently, the United States adopted a bill on human rights in North Korea and thus made it legal to provide financial and material support for overthrowing our system and to force third countries to do so.

The United States has gone so far as to slander and debase the supreme leadership of its dialogue partner. It also forces us to disarm ourselves like a defeated nation, thus attempting to forcibly dismantle our nuclear programme first and to overthrow our system through complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement. Consequently, the basis of negotiations, which were hardly moving towards a resolution of the nuclear issue, has been completely destroyed. If the United States wishes to coexist peacefully with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by abandoning its hostile policy, the nuclear issue will be resolved properly.

With regard to the six-party talks, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is willing to resume them. Nevertheless, the increasingly hostile policy of the United States and the clandestine nuclear-related experiments recently revealed in South Korea are major stumbling blocks to the continuation of the talks. Given this serious situation, in which the basis of the negotiations has been totally destroyed and the secret

nuclear-related experiments in South Korea have not yet been clarified, we are unable to participate in the talks aimed at discussing the nuclear-weapons programme. Therefore, if the six-party talks are to be resumed, the basis for the talks demolished by the United States should be properly restored and the truth of the secret nuclear experiments in South Korea clarified completely.

I take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the States Members of the United Nations for their active support for and understanding of our principled stand and hope that they will continue to contribute to the peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States by maintaining their balanced approach.

If the United Nations is to fulfil its mission for international peace and security and socio-economic development, it should play a leading role in addressing the major international issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of its Charter. To that end, the United Nations should no longer tolerate unilateralism and high-handedness, which constitute a serious violation of the Charter and existing international law. Disputes should be resolved peacefully through dialogue and negotiations, and there is no justification whatsoever for the unilateral use of force, such as the armed invasion of sovereign States.

Moreover, the Organization should be democratized so that all international issues can be resolved in the common interests of the Member States. In that regard, our delegation is of the view that the General Assembly should be empowered to review and approve the resolutions of the Security Council relating to sanctions and the use of force directly affecting international peace and security.

The reform of the Security Council should be undertaken in such a way as to enable it to ensure the full representation and interests of the non-aligned and other developing countries, which account for the overwhelming majority of Member States and contribute to a fair solution to disputes. In addition, practical measures should be taken to actively assist the developing countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development by strengthening the role of the United Nations and its affiliated organs in the socio-economic fields.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will in the future continue to regard independence, peace and friendship as the main ideals of its foreign policy and further strengthen its friendly and cooperative relations with all States Members of the United Nations that respect our sovereignty and actively contribute to international efforts to establish a just, equitable and new world order.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Radnaabazaryn Altangerel, chairman of the delegation of Mongolia.

Mr. Altangerel (Mongolia) (*spoke in French*): I wish to extend to you, Sir, my delegation's warmest congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. I am confident that, under your stewardship, this session will successfully accomplish its mission.

The outgoing year has been a challenging time as the international community has grappled with a host of formidable challenges, including terrorist attacks, the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, violent internal conflicts, the surge of infectious diseases and natural disasters, in addition to persisting poverty and hunger and humanitarian emergencies.

Moreover, the war in Iraq and its aftermath have had a lasting impact on the fabric of international affairs in the Middle East and the world over. The bitter divisions that it engendered over how to ensure our collective security against terror and the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have posed a challenge and a test for the United Nations. It is gratifying to see that, in these difficult times, the world Organization has been able to regain its validity as the indispensable common house of the entire human family.

To make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing all the priorities identified in the Millennium Declaration, world leaders pledged their resolve to undertake a set of bold measures to reform the world Organization so as to enable it to adequately address the manifold challenges ahead. The task of reforming the United Nations will undoubtedly require truly innovative approaches and the unfaltering commitment of Member States. In that respect, my delegation eagerly awaits the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, and ensuing recommendations by the Secretary-General to be submitted to the General Assembly later this year.

In the meantime, my delegation highly commends the hard work and tireless efforts of Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. Resolutions 58/126 and 58/316, adopted under his skilful leadership, have proved to be by far the most far-reaching actions in recent years. Significant as they are, we should nevertheless aim higher and work with vigour to further reaffirm the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations and to enable it to play that role more effectively.

On Security Council reform, I wish to join previous speakers in reiterating that its composition has long ceased to reflect current geopolitical realities. Mongolia reaffirms its support for a just and equitable enlargement of the Security Council by increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent seats, while ensuring the representation of developing and developed countries. In that regard, my Government supports the legitimate aspirations of such countries as Japan, Germany and India that are willing and able to shoulder greater responsibility in pursuit of international peace, security and development. Permanent seats, in our view, should also be allocated to Latin America and Africa. We do not, however, seek enlargement for its own sake — the expanded Security Council must be fully equipped to effectively react to the crises and conflicts of the new millennium. It is also our view that the veto power ought to be thoroughly reviewed, and efforts should be exerted to make the Council more democratic by enhancing its accountability and the transparency of its work.

There appears to be a broad consensus emerging that next year's high-level meeting to review the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the celebrations for the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations will galvanize us into making bold plans for the future — plans that will enable the family of nations to attain the ambitious, but achievable, goals set by the Millennium Declaration through a genuine display of solidarity, shared responsibility and effective partnership.

In his address to the Assembly last week the Secretary-General eloquently underscored the need to uphold the rule of law on both the international and domestic levels. Mongolia firmly believes that the rule of law and multilateralism are the fundamental principles of international relations in the twenty-first century. We must not falter or fail in pursuing them. The value of international law — the only viable framework of rules to govern the behaviour and interaction among States — must never be rated on its performance in the short term or for its ability to achieve near-sighted goals, nor should the value of dialogue and collective decision-making be called into question. Violation of those principles, even with the best of intentions, is dangerous. Let us remember that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Such actions would only bring about unforeseen and unintended effects that in the long term could be extremely harmful to established international mechanisms and processes and endanger the existing world order. That simple truth applies to every aspect of international life from the war on terror and the maintenance of peace and security to the management of international trade and environmental protection. Indeed, any unlawful act, once committed, will certainly have far greater repercussions than imagined at the outset — repercussions that will ultimately undermine its original objectives.

The persistent instability of some regions of the world and the people who suffer from internal armed conflicts represent the failure of world leaders to enforce the commitment they undertook in the Millennium Declaration to "spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war, whether within or between States". The violence and hatred that spread across the Darfur region of Sudan is one such tragic example.

In the Middle East, Mongolia notes with sadness the lack of progress on the path towards the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We urge both sides to exercise utmost restraint, and support the efforts of the Quartet to ensure the implementation of the road map.

Mongolia is also concerned with the security situation in Iraq. The end of occupation and the formal restoration of Iraqi sovereignty on 28 June 2004 were laudable achievements, yet the persisting climate of violence and insecurity threatens to undermine the efforts of the international community to bring peace, security and stability to that country. Mongolia wholeheartedly supports the political process based on Security Council resolutions 1483 (2003) and 1546 (2004), and the actions undertaken by the interim Government to convene a national conference, create an interim council and hold elections early next year.

In Afghanistan, the approaching presidential and parliamentary elections are important milestones for a new, democratic State. The registration of more than 10 million voters, a significant portion of whom are women, clearly demonstrates the strong determination of the Afghan people to rebuild their country. Continued engagement of the international community remains crucial in maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan and promoting the Bonn process.

The Korean nuclear crisis, and the resulting tensions on the Korean peninsula, cast dark clouds over all of North-East Asia. As a North-East Asian nation that rejects nuclear arms, Mongolia stands for a nuclear-weapon-free Korean peninsula and sees it as an important condition for the reconciliation of both Koreas and, therefore, for the peace and stability of the region. The continuation of the six-party talks towards a negotiated solution is of vital importance for the maintenance of peace and stability both on the Korean peninsula and in the region as a whole.

Indeed, strengthening international peace and security by supporting practical disarmament measures in every possible way has been one of the main priorities of Mongolia's foreign policy. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines and efforts to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons have an immediate bearing on human security and social and economic development around the world.

As an ardent advocate of the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, and, in particular, nuclear disarmament, Mongolia believes that the full and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by both the nuclear and the non-nuclear weapon States will play a pivotal role in promoting international peace and nuclear security. In that context, Mongolia welcomes Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), adopted unanimously under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, as a meaningful step towards curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. However, we also believe that another significant step needs to be made towards nuclear disarmament: the early entry into force and universalization on a priority basis of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The establishment of new and consolidation of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones should remain high on the international agenda. My Government will continue its efforts towards institutionalizing its nuclear-weapon-free status at the international level. Mongolia's internationally recognized and legally binding nuclear-weapon-free status could further contribute towards ensuring peace and stability in the region of North-East Asia and beyond.

The global war on terror remains high on the agenda of the international community. The 11 September attacks heralded the start of an unprecedented global campaign that united countries, large and small, in their resolve to stand together to combat terrorism.

And yet, despite the efforts of the international community, terrorism — like the Hydra of Lerna — seems to grow a new head for each one it loses.

The current year has been no exception to that sad pattern and civilians continue to be the target of attacks: in Iraq, both Iraqi and foreign nationals have been targeted; in Madrid, an attack was perpetrated against a commuter train; and, in the Russian Federation, there have been a string of attacks, the latest being the school massacre in Beslan, where children fell victim to an unprecedented atrocity.

Those events have highlighted once again the need for an effective international anti-terrorist campaign. The United Nations plays a central role in the fight against terror, coordinating the actions of its Member States and providing them with technical and legislative support. Mongolia supports the efforts of the Counter-Terrorism Committee aimed at its revitalization, and is looking forward to seeing the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate in operation. We also attach importance to the speedy finalization of draft international conventions on terrorism and nuclear terrorism currently in progress.

No matter how pressing the fight is against terror, it should not overshadow other issues that impact the daily lives of millions of people — from extreme poverty and hunger, to environmental degradation and HIV/AIDS, to health and education. The growing development disparity between rich and poor countries; increasing poverty and unemployment in the developing world, particularly in the least developed countries; the burden of debt and trade inequalities are of growing concern to us. We feel that development itself is an effective remedy for the root cause of those social ills, and thus attach particular importance to the implementation, at the national, regional and international levels, of the goals agreed to at the

Millennium Summit and in Monterrey, Johannesburg and Rome.

In this context, my delegation welcomes the New York Declaration on the Action Against Hunger and Poverty adopted on 20 September this year at the highest political level, which is aimed at fostering our common fight to overcome poverty and increase financing for development.

Mongolia welcomes the adoption by the World Trade Organization (WTO) members of the negotiating framework for the Doha trade round last July. This is of particular importance since the Doha Development Agenda provides significant opportunities for economic development and fair trade. We continue to favour special and differentiated treatment for developing countries, especially those with small and vulnerable economies whose populations are largely dependent for their livelihoods on being granted full market access and low import tariffs by the major trading partners.

One year from now, world leaders will meet here at the summit level to review progress in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. In preparation for this important event, Mongolia has produced its first national report on the implementation of the Goals.

In recent years, the world has witnessed the emergence of a new global commitment to democracy and good governance. A little over a year ago, Mongolia hosted the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which had the principal theme of democracy, good governance and civil society. Mongolia is now actively engaged in ensuring an effective follow-up to the conference both nationally and internationally.

In this respect, my delegation wishes to commend the proposal by the President of the United States aimed at establishing a democracy fund at the United Nations to help countries to lay the foundations of democracy by instituting the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, a free press, a multiparty system and trade unions. This fund would help support our endeavours to strengthen democracy and good governance and to develop an effective partnership with civil society in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

This year, Mongolians have participated in their fourth parliamentary election. During the election, the two main political parties in our country, the Motherland-Democracy Coalition and the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, won almost an equal number of seats in the Parliament. The two political parties have agreed to form a coalition Government on the basis of consensus-building, thereby demonstrating that democratic principles and values have firmly taken root in Mongolian soil. I have no doubt that the new coalition Government will wish to strengthen democracy and good governance, ensure sustained economic growth, reduce poverty and unemployment, and pursue a foreign policy that is open, multifaceted and proactive.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.